

POLICY PROPOSAL

H O P

HAITIAN OVERHAUL IN POLICING



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Executive Summary

HOP aims to improve the security and social situation in Port-au-Prince through the development and implementation of a community policing policy with the Haitian National Police (HNP). The community policing approach will contribute to moving past a system that relies heavily on punishment and force, which to date has proved ineffective, and will focus on collaborating with civil society and constructive problem-solving. Led by Global Affairs Canada (GAC), HOP has a budget of 20 million dollars (Canadian) and will provide comprehensive community policing training to 100 recruits and facilitate engaged dialogue between the police and the people of Port-au-Prince over two years.

Objectives

HOP has two main objectives: the training of police officers and the improvement and strengthening of civil society-police relations. As for the first, the training will extend over two years and be given to two groups of 50 recruits by RCMP instructors. As women are often disproportionately affected by the effects of insecurity and violence and have an integral role in finding meaningful solutions, they will be specifically sought out during the recruitment phase. The training will concentrate on the professionalization of the officers in training and will provide them with the necessary skills to effectively implement community policing. This will involve the officers being trained not only to respond to immediate threats to public safety but also to proactively engage in problem solving using the SARA (scanning, analysis, response, and assessment) model (annex two).¹ After the main training regime, there will be periodic refresher courses to ensure the effective implementation of the community policing principles moving forward.

The second objective, closely linked to the first, will be the creation of durable partnerships with police forces and civil society in recognition of the fact that real solution necessitates sustained engagement and trust building with the people of Port-au-Prince. In the first place, this will be accomplished through the training program that will emphasize strong public communication, professional conduct, and de-escalation in cases of conflict. In addition, HOP will provide support and guidance to strengthen the Haitian National Police's current transparency and accountability policies in view of providing a strong basis for a relationship premised on trust and respect with the people of Port-au-Prince. Furthermore, in its capacity as a track-two initiative, in collaboration with the NGOs engaged to help implement this step, HOP will facilitate the establishment of an ongoing and inclusive dialogue between the police and the public, particularly the most marginalized, to give an opportunity to the latter to express their concerns and come to mutually acceptable solutions. This will notably be done by organizing meetings bringing together stakeholders (e.g., the police, community members, non-profits, local business, and local media) and setting up other mechanisms to receive public feedback.

Although, as a pilot project, HOP is not large in scope, at the end of two years there will be a strong base for future initiatives and 100 trained police officers prepared to serve and collaborate with the people of Port-au-Prince to address the current security crisis in a constructive and professional manner.

Stakeholders

Global Affairs Canada (GAC)

GAC is the lead of HOP. Having led a multitude of previous missions in Haiti, GAC has the expertise and experience to successfully coordinate the implementation of the program. Accordingly, the department will have a coordinating role and not directly participate in the delivery of HOP, delegating the training to the RCMP and the facilitation of police-civilian dialogue to its NGO partners.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

As a non-military organization with experience in community policing and training missions abroad, the RCMP is well placed to carry out the training of the recruits. Six RCMP instructors will be sent for the training. These instructors will also provide guidance on reforming the HNP in accordance with principles of accountability and community policing.

Non-Governmental Organizations

In line with its community-based approach, HOP will engage a multitude of local NGOs in Port-au-Prince in the search for real workable solutions. For the delivery of the program itself, HOP will partner with two Haitian NGOs: La Fondasyon Je Klere and Le Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains (RNDDH). La Fondasyon Je Klere is a non-profit organization that encourages Haitians, and particularly youth, to become active participants in public life and to strive towards positive social change and the respect of human rights in Haitian institutions.ⁱⁱ The RNDDH aims to raise awareness of and protect the rights of Haitians and has done important and pertinent work in a number of areas, including human rights education for the HNP and grassroots organizations and support for minors in conflict with the law.ⁱⁱⁱ Both organizations have extensive community engagement experience and will ensure a constructive dialogue takes place between all of the relevant stakeholders.

Local people of Port-au-Prince

The local people of Port-au-Prince are at the center of HOP, and will be involved, individually and through local organizations, from start to finish. With the support of this program, the people of Port-au-Prince will decide the way forward.

Port-au-Prince Gangs

The sheer degree of violence and insecurity perpetuated by the gangs that control much of Port-au-Prince is a serious obstacle to overcome. In contrast to other approaches, HOP does not envisage a response that relies on forceful confrontation and instead takes the view that a workable, long-term solution must come from dialogue and understanding. Through community-policing training and outreach with the public, HOP will encourage the development of a better understanding of the social function that gangs play and the underlying drivers of their activity in hopes of moving the conversation beyond simple and unproductive denunciations. Therefore, while those working under the auspices of HOP will not directly interface with the gangs as such, they will reach out to meaningfully engage those individuals who resort to joining for a variety of reasons.

Outline and Structure

Pre-Project Risk Assessment

The project aims to reform the Haitian National Police Force, addressing the increasing violent crime rates and rebuilding trust in the Haitian government and national police force. The project has identified a provisional need to reduce violent crime rates in Port-au-Prince. The central objective of the project is to rebuild trust between the Haitian community, the government, and the national police force.

The project has been designed according to the conclusions derived from a needs assessment, ensuring that it responds to and engages with the community's needs. To determine the specific features required for the project to be accepted, engagement with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) is crucial. This will help confirm the findings of the needs assessment and ensure partnership-building with the police. Furthermore, previous interventions by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) must be evaluated to avoid failure due to insufficient funding, short-term focus, and insufficient focus on change.^{iv}

The theory of change for this project begins by identifying the problem: a lack of trust by the Haitian community in the government and national police force.^v The community's needs revolve around high crime rates and insecurity, which lead locals to turn to gangs as a source of protection and security. The project proposes a training program for Haitian police focused on community policing, teaching community policing tactics and implementing reforms reducing police abuse of the local population.

Several events and conditions could influence the project's outcomes, such as the political environment, public attitude, aid players, and macroeconomic picture. The political environment in Haiti has been marked by instability and weak governance, creating an opportunity for gangs to thrive and take control of certain neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince.^{vi} The project must account for these dynamics and collaborate closely with the Haitian government to ensure that the police reforms are implemented effectively and sustained over time. This collaboration is vital to rebuilding trust and ensuring that the government has the capacity to maintain public safety and order in these neighborhoods.^{vii}

Public attitude is another critical factor to consider, as residents in gang-dominated neighborhoods have often lost faith in the government and police force due to corruption, abuse, and failure to provide basic security. The project must prioritize community engagement and transparency to restore public confidence in the police force. This can be achieved by involving residents in the reform process, soliciting their feedback, and ensuring that the police are held accountable for any misconduct.^{viii}

Aid players, including international organizations and foreign governments, play a crucial role in supporting Haiti's development and stability.^{ix} The project must coordinate with these stakeholders to ensure that the police reform efforts are aligned with broader initiatives aimed at improving governance, social services, and economic opportunities in Haiti. By working closely with aid players, the project can maximize its impact and avoid duplication or counterproductive efforts.

The macroeconomic picture in Haiti, characterized by high unemployment, poverty, and limited access to education and basic services, contributes to the proliferation of gangs in Port-au-Prince.^x To address the root causes of crime and insecurity in these neighborhoods, the project should adopt a holistic approach that goes beyond police reform. This may involve advocating for policies and programs that improve access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities for residents in gang-dominated areas, helping to reduce their reliance on gangs for protection and support.

Operational Decisions and Monitoring of Impact During a Project

The proposed initiative of training Port-au-Prince's police force to engage in community policing underscores the importance of informed, strategic decision making, particularly under pressure, uncertainty, and rapidly changing conditions. While Canadian trainers will be imparting their knowledge and experience of community policing upon Haitian police forces, they should refrain from any active involvement in ground-level policing. This means that the local civil society specialists who interact with community organizations must be adequately prepared to respond to future abuses by the police should they occur over the course of the project's duration. This is necessary to reassure the CSOs and facilitate their continued participation in the project, as well as to help them voice their criticisms to the police forces.

Further, to ensure that the project is achieving the desired outcome, this proposal includes provisions for a cyclical feedback mechanism to maximize accountability and effectiveness. This mechanism will involve RCMP trainers, Canadian CSOs, Haitian CSOs, and Haitian police representatives working together periodically to report on the progress of the training and identify additional training needs as they arise. This feedback mechanism will ensure that any operational limitations are addressed, which would enhance the project's ability to meet its objectives. The feedback mechanism encourages national ownership, emphasizes local capacity-building, and engages actors who have strong ties to and stakes in the targeted communities, effectively making it a track-two initiative. Indeed, the HOP project aims to build confidence and improve communication between police forces and community members, with civil society organizations serving as intermediaries between government actors and communities, advocating for and addressing the needs and interests of the people they represent.

As such, measuring community satisfaction with policing is also an essential aspect of monitoring the project's impact. The feedback mechanism will identify areas for correction or improvement in the training of future cohorts. Additionally, measuring levels of ongoing CSO-Police dialogue will also help to understand the project's progress (including, for example, the number and duration of meetings, as well as qualitative assessments of their outcomes). The feedback received from these metrics will help to identify any shortcomings and make necessary adjustments to the training program. There is also, as specified previously, a need to address the opportunity to make immediate operational decisions if things go from good to bad. These decisions will need to be made in the context of the project's objectives and the feedback received from the feedback mechanism. The decision-makers will need to be prepared to make quick, informed decisions in response to rapidly changing conditions.

To ensure that knowledge transfer is taking place, a general program outline has been developed as follows: the program will begin with one cohort, which will undergo training for a period of six months to one year. The cohort will then receive supplemental training and annual refreshers for the remaining three years. In the second year, an additional cohort will be added to the program, with training being revised in response to CSO feedback. This approach will ensure that the training program remains up-to-date and responsive to the needs of the community. The design and implementation of this project demonstrates how effective decision making, cyclical feedback mechanisms, and consistent monitoring of impact both during and after the project are critical to the success of training Port-au-Prince's police force to engage in community policing.

Preliminary Budget

The specific operational requirements of HOP will be co-developed with the RCMP (for the community policing training portion) and with Canadian and Haitian CSOs (for the community engagement portion). A preliminary allocation of the \$20 million CAD budget would see \$15 million allocated to training two cohorts of approximately 100 Haitian National Police officers. Each cohort would sequentially receive one year of classroom, scenario, and on-the-job training in community policing mindsets and strategies, on topics such as building trust and ties in the policed community. \$2 million would be allocated to community engagement efforts facilitated by the National Police and CSOs. The objective of this engagement is to gauge the community's perception on the Police's performance, and identify areas of improvement for the second cohort's training and both cohorts' refresher courses. \$2 million will be allocated to those refresher courses which will be less intensive than the initial training and be intended to evaluate the officers on their community policing skills and strategies, and correct their behaviour in response to community feedback. Lastly, \$1 million will be set aside to account for potential cost overruns on the project.

Post-Project Impact

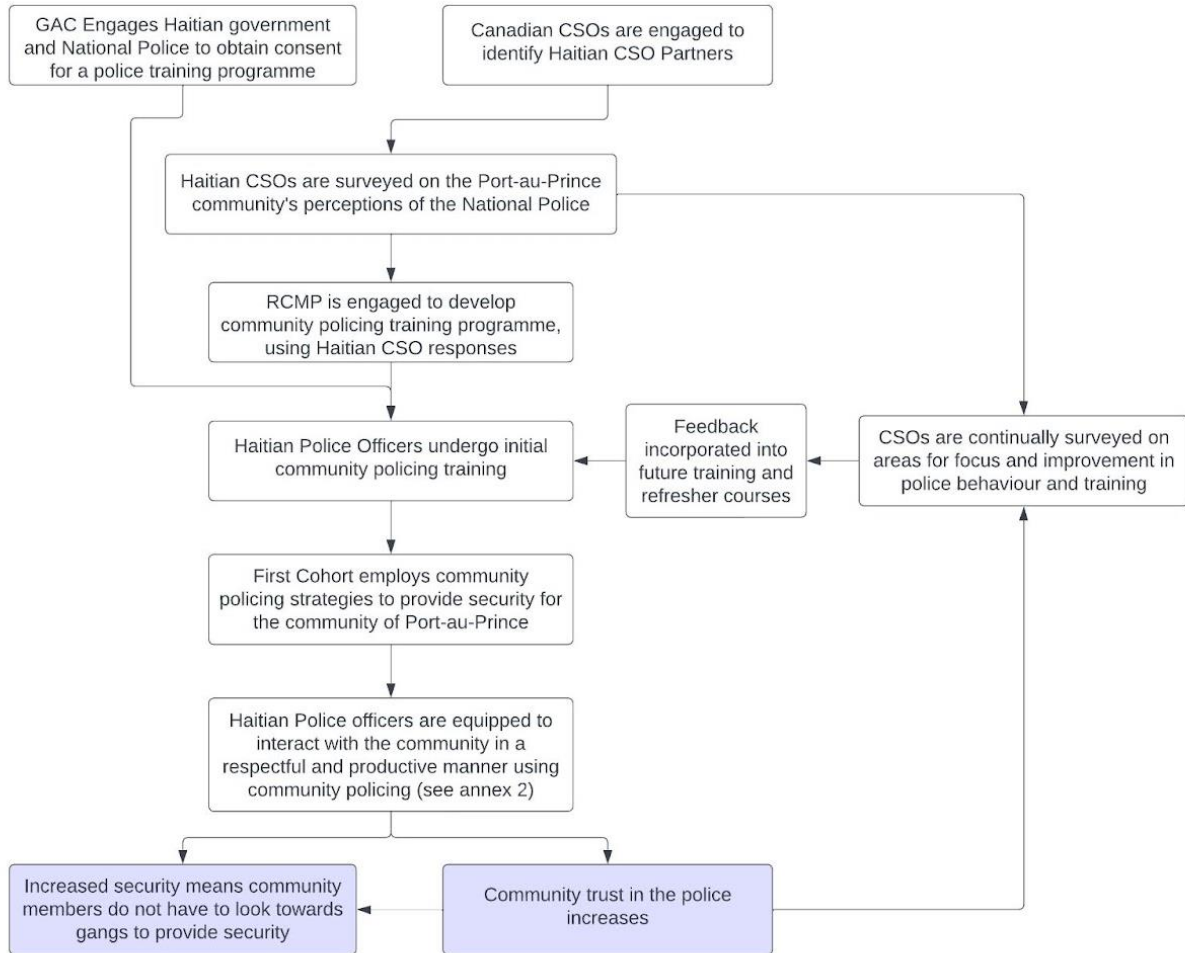
The ultimate goal of the project is to reduce violent crime in Port-au-Prince and increase trust and cooperation with the police, with a corresponding positive overall effect on confidence in state mechanisms. The immediate impact of the project will be measured through the reduction of violent crime in the city using an index of various distinct crime rates. However, it is important to assess the long-term impact of the project, particularly four years after its conclusion. To measure this impact, a joint report will be created by the police, Canadian CSOs, and Haitian CSOs. Additionally, levels of ongoing CSO-police dialogue will be measured and surveys may be distributed to CSOs to gather their perceptions of the project's impact.

The main indicator of the project's impact will be a reduction in violent crime statistics. However, it is also important to distinguish the particular impact of this project from other peace processes that might have significant and potentially overlapping effects on the communities of interest. Specifically, the impact of this project will be assessed by comparing public perceptions of the police and of safety more generally in Port-au-Prince to baseline levels across the country. Further, the project is focused solely on policing rather than the government as a whole, which sets it apart from other peace projects operating in the area.

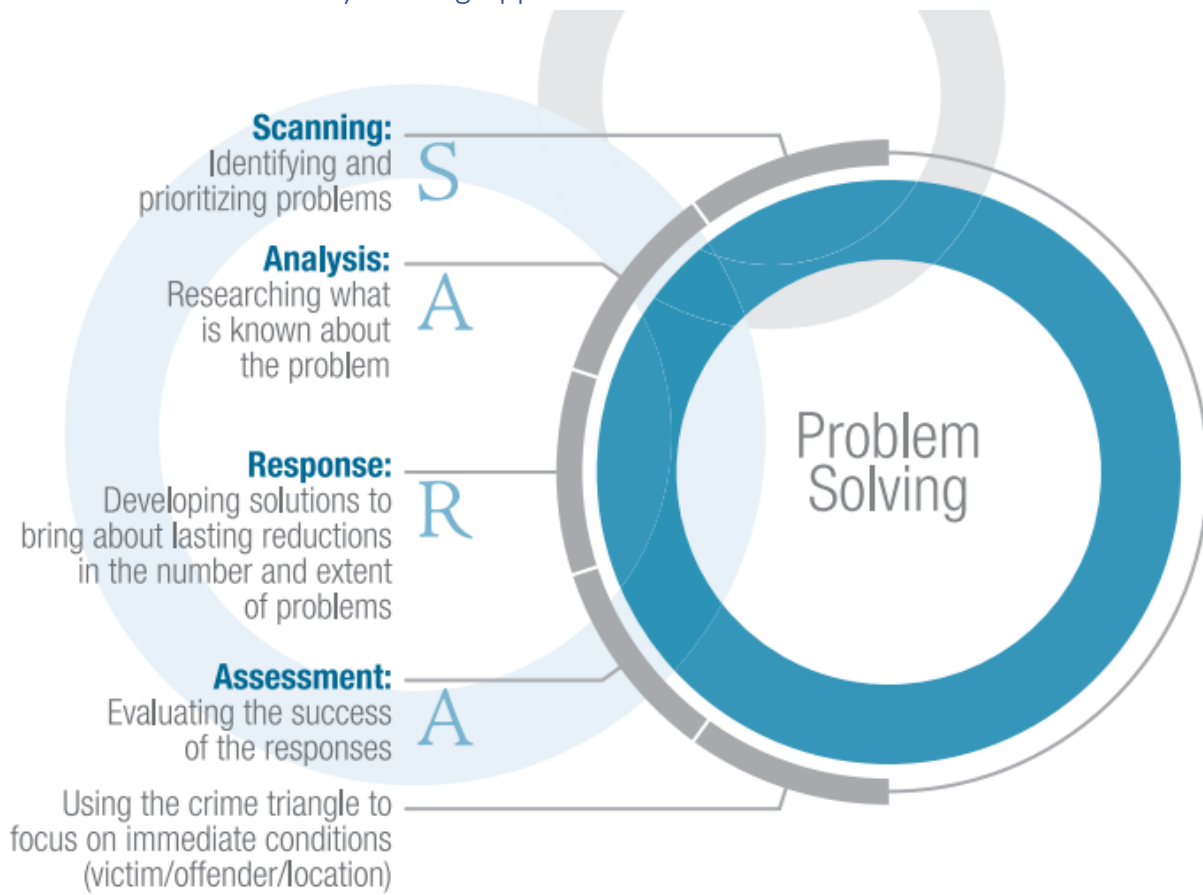
The long-term impact of the project will be assessed through increased levels of trust and cooperation with the police, leading to increased confidence in state mechanisms. By establishing a community policing model in Port-au-Prince, the project aims to build stronger relationships between the police and community members, which will promote trust, cooperation, and effective crime prevention. The success of the project will be measured through ongoing feedback from stakeholders and data analysis of crime statistics, ultimately demonstrating its impact on the structures and processes of peace and conflict in Port-au-Prince.

Annexes

Annex 1: HOP's Theory of Change



Annex 2: SARA Community Policing Approach



Annex 3: Citations

- ⁱ Community Oriented Policing Services, *Community Policing Defined*, (Washington: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2014), <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/cnmcs-plcng/cn32080-eng.pdf>.
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- ⁱⁱⁱ "Qui sommes-nous & Que faisons-nous," Réseau National de Défense des Droits Humains, accessed April 8, 2023, <https://web.rnddh.org/a-propos/qui-sommes-nous-que-faisons-nous/>.
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- ^v Laura Gozzi, "Haiti Police Riot after Crime Gangs Kill 14 Officers," *BBC News*, January 26, 2023, sec. Latin America & Caribbean, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-64421308>; Pierre Richard Luxama and Megan Janetsky, "Haitian Police Rebels Protest Is Paralyzing Port-Au-Prince," *AP NEWS*, January 26, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/law-enforcement-caribbean-port-au-prince-haiti-crime-1ee816630cb9d1baf4346d9bcc39d47>.
- ^{vi} Megan Janetsky and Pierre Richard Luxama, "In Haiti, Gangs Take Control as Democracy Withers," *AP NEWS*, January 31, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/haiti-gangs-democracy-at-risk-7ddcea955fdd364e2b574e28daa71d03>.
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- ^x United Nations, "Haiti: UN sounds alarm over worsening gang violence across Port-au-Prince," *UN News*, 16 July 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1122662>.